

## **Soldiers on road to recovery, challenged on Ride 2 Recovery**

By Mary Ball and Kimberly Hulett, General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. – The Ride 2 Recovery Challenge looked like a bicycle race. Its riders were clad in brightly-colored spandex, helmeted, and wore reflective eyewear.

It smelled like a race, the bitter odor of new tires unpacked and stretched over high-tech rims, the steady pace of air pumps stretching rubber farther with each shush of air.

But to say it was a race would also be a stretch.

Because in a race, there is only one winner.

At the R2R 2013 Gulf Coast Challenge, everyone was a winner.

“Everyone who participated in this event got something from it,” said Capt. Carl Bicskei, General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital Warrior Transition Unit commander here. “R2R is about having personal goals, and working toward those goals, while both providing, and benefiting from, teamwork,” he said.

The General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital WTU R2R team who rode in this six-day Gulf Coast Challenge included four transitioning Soldiers and two cadre members.

Staff Sgt. Travis Radtke, Spc. Benjamin Frazier, Sgt. Shelia Moss, and Sgt. 1st Class Samantha Goldenstien, Soldiers assigned to recover at the WTU, began the R2R at the Super Dome in New Orleans Sunday March 3.

Capt. Christopher Forrest, WTU Nurse Case Manger, and WTU 1st Sgt. Ralph Casselli III, completed the six-member team from Fort Leonard Wood as they road from Alabama through Mississippi to Tallahassee. Fla.

Riders travelled between 45 and 75 miles per day.

The last day was the longest. Riders had the option to ride 109 miles to the finish line or be bused a portion of the way.

The Fort Leonard Wood team rode every Tuesday and Thursday for several months prior to the event, as weather permitted.

“Due to my hips, I can no longer run. Biking was recommended to me,” said Goldenstein. “Training for this challenge was a great opportunity to get into the biking scene. I used to do half-marathons, so this was a nice transition to another endurance challenge,” she said.

The goal of many was to ride every mile, but riders set their own goals and measures for personal accomplishments. The race was really about riding every mile they could and remain healthy and injury-free.

“I was told by a plethora of people I could not do this challenge,” said Frasier. “Then Sgt. 1st Class Goldenstien and Sgt. Moss talked me into signing up,” he said.

“I had knee surgery in early January and once I was cleared to begin riding, I trained like a crazy man to prove I could do it,” said Frasier.

The advantage to participating in a Ride2Recovery Challenge is having support of fellow riders who ride at a similar pace and offer encouragement to each other.

“I am just glad I am doing this challenge with my battle buddies from deployment,” said Moss.

“This is just one more thing I can mark off my bucket list. After this ride, I will either love cycling or I will hate it,” said Moss.

There are several Ride 2 Recovery challenges slated throughout the year. The Texas Challenge, from San Antonio to Fort Worth, is scheduled for April.

To see more photos or for more information, go to [www.ride2recovery.com/](http://www.ride2recovery.com/).

(Editor’s Note: Mary Ball and Kimberly Hulett are Warrior Transition Unit Family Readiness Support Assistants at the General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital)

## CUTLINE1:



Six General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital Soldiers assigned to the Warrior Transition Unit here and participated in the Ride 2 Recovery. The R2R kicked off at the Super Dome in New Orleans on Sunday, March 3, where this photo was taken. Left to right, Staff Sgt. Travis Radtke, Spc. Benjamin Frazier, Sgt. Shelia Moss, and Sgt. 1st Class Samantha Goldenstien, all assigned to recover, pose next to Capt. Christopher Forrest, WTU Nurse Case Manager, and 1st Sgt. Ralph Casselli III.

Photo by Mary Ball

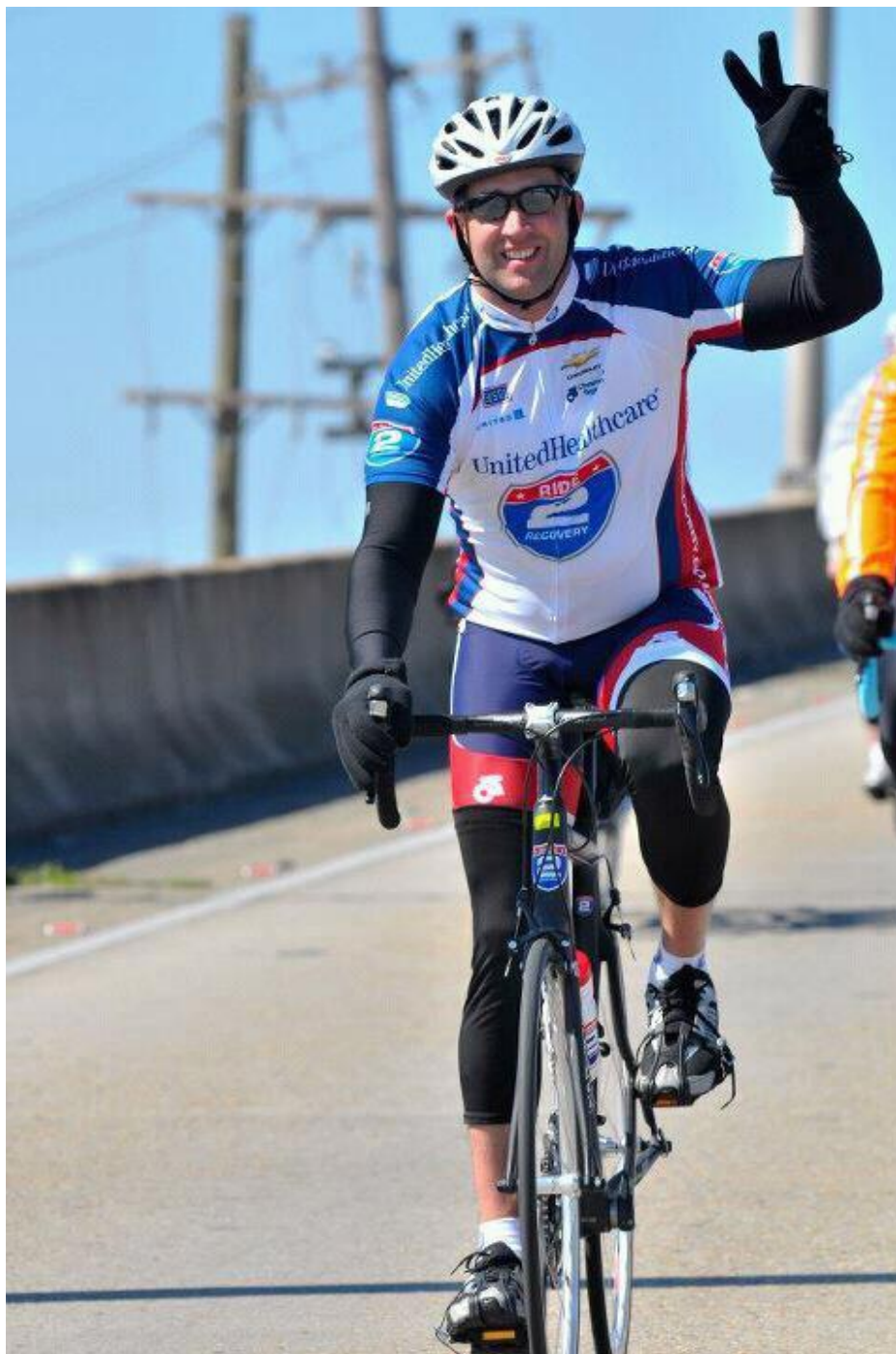
## CUTLINE2:



Six Soldiers from the Fort Leonard Wood Warrior Transition Unit Rode six days during the Ride 2 Recovery Gulf Coast Challenge March 3-8. The road to recovery is not race, and neither is the R2R bicycle ride from New Orleans to Tallahassee, Fla. Check it out at: <http://ride2recovery.com/>

Photo by Mary Ball





Warrior Transition Unit 1st Sgt. Ralph Casselli III was one of two cadre members and four transitioning Soldiers from General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital's WTU bicycle team who rode in the six-day "Ride 2 Recovery, 2013 Gulf Coast Challenge" last week. Check the R2R website at [Ride 2 Recovery](#) and our Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/GLWACH](http://www.Facebook.com/GLWACH) for more photos. Photo by Tiffini Skuce, R2R photographer